GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:467
ANSWERED ON:27.04.2016
Subsidy to Hindu and Sikh Pilgrims
Swami Maharaj Dr. Sakshi

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

(a) the scheme formulated to provide better amenities to Non-Resident Indians keen to visit India from across the World for Kailash Mansarovar Yatra during the year 2015-16 and 2016-17;
(b) whether the Government proposes to provide cash subsidy to Hindu and Sikh pilgrims visiting India for pilgrimage purposes from other countries every year on the lines of Haj pilgrims;
(c) if so, the details thereof;
(d) whether the Government proposes to amend the norms and rules for providing subsidy to Hindu and Sikh pilgrims during the current year; and
(e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) Ministry of External Affairs organizes the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra in cooperation with the State Governments of Uttarakhand, Delhi, and Sikkim along with Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP). In addition to the existing Yatra route via Lipulekh (Uttarakhand), an additional route via Nathu La Pass (Sikkim) was opened in 2015 for the benefit of Yatris. The Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam Limited (KMVN), and Sikkim Tourism Development Cooperation (STDC) make logistical arrangements including accommodation, food, and transport on the Indian side for the Yatra. The Yatra is organized in cooperation with the Government of China which provides logistical facilities on the Tibet side. Government of India takes various steps to facilitate the Yatra which include a dedicated website to further simplify and expedite the registration and selection process, communication with Yatris, and a helpline based on Interactive Voice Response System which provides information in Hindi and English to the Yatris. Medical tests are also conducted for Yatris to ensure their fitness for high altitude endurance. Provision for air-lift of Yatris by helicopter is also available in coordination with concerned agencies in case of emergency. One Liaison Officer is appointed for each batch for coordination with Indian and Chinese authorities concerned, and seeks assistance in case of any emergency for the safety and well-being of Yatris. The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) provides security cover and basic medical assistance to Yatris on the Indian side. Facilities are upgraded on a continuous basis along the entire route of the Yatra.

The Government of India arranges, on self-payment basis, facilities like transportation, accommodation, fresh food, medical tests, guides, Chinese visa, foreign exchange, and porters and ponies for carrying goods and belongings of yatris. The Government of India does not extend any subsidy to pilgrims of the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra.

(b) to (e) No.